
THE ULTIMATE AUTOMOTIVE MANAGER

*Essential Tips for Turning
Managers into Leaders*

Mike Whitty
and
Irene M. McDonald, Ph.D.

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THE ULTIMATE AUTOMOTIVE MANAGER

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INTRODUCTION

Management is an important responsibility. It's a position that requires more than just an understanding of the normal day-to-day operations of your department. The success of your job is dependant upon your ability to turn ordinary people into outstanding employees.

There are few things more rewarding for a manager than to watch his/her employees grow. This continued growth is what takes a company from one level to the next in stability, as well as profitability. If you're the type of manager that takes pride in your department, and your staff, then welcome to **The Ultimate Automotive Manager**.

The Ultimate Automotive Manager is a book that provides every supervisor or manager the tools necessary to become an effective leader. The easy-to-read format will give you the tips you'll need at-a-glance, leaving you plenty of time to run your department.

Since we understand that most managers are very busy, each chapter averages from 4-6 pages of valuable information. The chapters are laid out in alphabetical order for quick access to any of 23 topics. There's no need to read this book from cover-to-cover. Simply choose the topic of interest, take 5-10 minutes of reading time, and you will pick up many ideas that will make you a more capable leader.

The business world belongs to individuals who can effectively hire the right people, keep them motivated, and get their employees to work at peak performance. Whether you're already established as a manager, or just starting out, **The Ultimate Automotive Manager** can be the key to your success.

Mike Whitty
Dr. Irene M. McDonald

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CHARACTERISTICS

What Differentiates Leadership From Management

People are usually promoted into management because of their seniority and work skills and not necessarily because of their people skills and leadership skills. Merely handling the day-to-day operations of the job won't be enough if you want to get ahead. The success of your department will be determined by the type of managing style and philosophy that you embrace. Following are some characteristics that a manager must possess in order to become an effective leader:

■ THE ABILITY TO ESTABLISH A PLEASANT ATMOSPHERE

Most people will spend approximately one-third of their lives in a job-related environment; therefore, it stands to reason that if they enjoy going to work, they will be happy and productive workers. If the working climate is enjoyable and hassle-free, chances are your employees will enjoy being there. Management bears the responsibility to create the proper atmosphere and working conditions that will lead to employee satisfaction and high performance.

■ THE ABILITY TO MAINTAIN INTEGRITY

A leader should behave the way he expects his employees to behave. To be a role model, you can't say one thing and do another. Managers

should abide by the same codes that they set for their employees. A manager cannot expect an employee to arrive on time every day if he himself is consistently late. A manager cannot set deadlines for employees if he does not meet his own. Since managers are in a high-profile position, the respect they will receive from their employees will be determined by their own integrity.

■ **THE ABILITY TO ESTABLISH HIGH LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE**

To make a department successful, managers must define and set the standards of operation. At its most basic level, this means providing employees with a clear set of instructions and the proper tools and equipment. From here, you must ensure a pleasant atmosphere to make a work-conducive environment. Once employees realize that their boss is “going to bat” for them, they will strive to perform at their highest level.

■ **THE ABILITY TO CONTINUOUSLY LEARN**

Leaders should know about the responsibilities of their department and about how their department relates to all other departments in the company. A leader should also be knowledgeable, but not necessarily a technical expert about the functions of his subordinates. As a leader, you must continuously learn about the technical side, as well as the business side of your position. Whenever possible, enroll in relevant courses, attend workshops and seminars, read trade books and journals and listen to motivational or instructional cassettes. Exposing your to new information will make your job more profitable and enjoyable. The enthusiasm you gain by increasing your knowledge should transfer to your employees. Your enthusiasm may inspire them to want to increase their learning.

■ **THE ABILITY TO TRAIN EMPLOYEES WELL**

In order to get results through other people, it's not enough to simply tell your employees what is expected of them. It's important that you train your employees to do their jobs well. To be a good trainer, you must be able to convey information in a simple and practical way that can be easily understood by others. This can be achieved through explanation and demonstration, as well as by an active follow-up procedure to determine if the training was effective.

■ **THE ABILITY TO MAKE SACRIFICES**

To keep a loyal staff, it's important that you be available when they need you. You must be prepared to accept the fact that your work days will be longer. Much of your time at work will be devoted to your employees, making it necessary for you to stay late to complete your task or take work home.

■ **THE ABILITY TO WORK HARD**

All of your ideas may not be popular or workable. Expect to become disappointed and discouraged at times. You must realize that success is not necessarily achieved through complex strategies. Success comes from hard work, persistence, perseverance and conscientiously carrying out the duties and leadership responsibilities of your position. Let your employees see you working hard and they in turn will work hard for you.

■ **THE ABILITY TO SHARE RESPONSIBILITY**

Many employees like knowing that they are part of a team and that their efforts will ultimately benefit not only the company and the boss, but also themselves. A leader should not have to make all the decisions,

policies and plans alone. There is a wealth of knowledge and ideas within each department. Let your staff know that they are a valuable part of the organization. Allow them to contribute their ideas and share in the responsibility and success of the department.

Take a good look at yourself and determine how closely you come to the preceding descriptions. As a leader, your responsibility is to create an atmosphere that makes it easy for people to do their best work. If your behaviors and personality inhibit this type of environment, it may be time for some self-assessment.

RATE YOURSELF ON THE FOLLOWING:

	Low				High
● I take responsibility for establishing the atmosphere in my department.	1	2	3	4	5
● I take responsibility for establishing morale in my department.	1	2	3	4	5
● Integrity exists within myself and my employees.	1	2	3	4	5
● High values of performance exist within my department.	1	2	3	4	5
● I continuously advance my education in my field.	1	2	3	4	5
● I take responsibility to train, or have my employees trained.	1	2	3	4	5
● I make sacrifices for my employees.	1	2	3	4	5
● I work hard for the success of my department.	1	2	3	4	5
● I allow my employees to share in the responsibility of the department.	1	2	3	4	5

LIST ONE AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT.

HOW WILL YOU IMPROVE THIS AREA?

COMPLAINTS

How To Handle Employee Complaints

Regardless of how smoothly you run your department, there will always be employee complaints. It is unrealistic to think that you can satisfy everyone all the time. People will complain about other employees, the work, the workplace, compensation for work produced, etc. It is the method you choose for handling employee grievances that will determine how quickly these problems can be resolved. Opening the lines of communication between you and your staff and honoring their concerns, regardless of how petty they seem to you, can prevent larger problems from occurring later on. And proper communication, particularly in grievance situations, requires that you become a good listener. Don't interrupt your employees while they are speaking. Give them signs that you are indeed paying attention.

■ MAKE IT EASY FOR EMPLOYEES TO COME TO YOU

As a manager you are very busy. Every interruption in your work day only delays the completion of important tasks. But employee problems can also delay productivity. Be available and be approachable. If your job keeps you away from your office and department, frequently post consultation hours and encourage employees to make use of your available time. When warranted, meet with employees separately and privately. And to maintain their trust, keep the content of your conversations confidential.

■ **EXPLAIN MAJOR GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES TO EVERYONE**

Make certain once an employee is hired that all formal and informal procedures are discussed immediately. If your company provides a policy and procedures manual, the grievance procedure should be included in the contents. Reviewing the entire manual should be a mandatory requirement for all new employees. This allows the employees to know what is expected of them and protects the company and department from miscommunication later on. If you are newly transferred to a management position and you have procedures that differ from those of the previous manager, make sure you discuss these new guidelines with everyone involved.

■ **PATIENCE, PLEASE**

Handling complaints is a frustrating, nerve-racking job. Along with all of your problems, you must also be concerned with someone else's predicaments. Don't show your frustration! Be patient with your employees' concerns. Deal with the facts instead of the emotions.

■ **BRING SOLUTIONS WITH THE PROBLEMS**

Whenever employee complaints and concerns are problems that affect the entire group, encourage your staff to also suggest how these concerns might best be resolved. Place a suggestion box in your department and review the suggestions often. Periodically hold a group meeting to discuss these suggestions. Implement those changes that seem feasible and beneficial. Then observe to see if these changes have improved departmental morale.

■ **LISTEN BEFORE PASSING JUDGMENT**

Keep an open mind and don't intimidate an employee who wants to discuss a problem. Before offering your comments, give the employee

your full attention and a chance to explain his perception of the problem. A good manager, like a mediator, will listen to all sides of an argument before drawing a conclusion. Give your employees the feeling that their concerns are also your concerns.

■ **WRITE DOWN ALL THE FACTS**

If the concerns are of a serious nature, take notes on everything that is said, including your comments. This will help you keep the facts straight if you should need to refer to them at a later date. Taking notes will also help you document information that should be added to an employee's personal file.

■ **PROVIDE FEEDBACK**

Take time to carefully think the employees concern through and be courteous enough to let the employee know when he should expect a response from you. Sometimes employees will be able to solve their own problems, but knowing that a higher authority is willing to take time to listen to them vent may be all that is needed. If you must intercede, never make a decision impulsively. Then, follow through with your feedback as promised.

■ **DOUBLE-CHECK YOUR RESULTS**

Before you report back to your employee with your solution, make sure you have assessed all the facts and that the decision you are making is the best under the circumstances. Make certain that your judgments are within company policy and are ethical and fair.

Handling employee complaints requires patience, a willingness to listen and the confidence that you will make the best possible decisions. It takes a lot of courage to stand up for what you believe is right, to make decisions regardless of

the consequences, and to accept the blame graciously when you are wrong. Don't make a promise you can't keep or announce a punishment you don't intend to enforce. Remain honest, consistent and fair, and your employees will respect you.

RATE YOURSELF ON THE FOLLOWING:

	Low			High	
● I make it easy for employees to come to me.	1	2	3	4	5
● I explain grievance procedures to everyone.	1	2	3	4	5
● I make time to listen.	1	2	3	4	5
● I am patient when handling complaints.	1	2	3	4	5
● I have my employees bring solutions with the problems.	1	2	3	4	5
● I listen before passing judgement.	1	2	3	4	5
● I write down all the facts.	1	2	3	4	5
● I provide sufficient feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
● I express concern for employee complaints.	1	2	3	4	5
● I cultivate honesty in my employees.	1	2	3	4	5
● I make decisions I know I can keep.	1	2	3	4	5

LIST ONE AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT.

HOW WILL YOU IMPROVE THIS AREA?

If you'd like to learn more,
you can purchase this program
by visiting the order page.